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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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**T**he CLEAR program is an ongoing pilot gang suppression and community engagement program with the ultimate purpose of recovering communities from the effects of gang violence. It is structured as a multi-tiered collaboration among five major law enforcement agencies within Los Angeles County, which work with community members and institutions in targeted areas to achieve program goals.

This evaluation focuses on the CLEAR program during its first two phases of operations spanning the period from April 1997 through September 1999. It addresses two major questions:

- 1) How well has CLEAR developed organizationally as a collaborative; and
- 2) What are the detectable impacts of the program to date.

In addressing both questions, the evaluation team also examined the extent to which the program had met the requirements of AB 853, the legislation that provided the bulk of program funding for the program's second phase of operations beginning in April 1998. The study examines these questions at three CLEAR operational sites, including the Northeast site, which has been operational for two years, and the Foothill and Pacific sites, which have been operational for only one year.

### ***I. Program Implementation***

The CLEAR program has been fully implemented, and continues to evolve, at each of the three Phase II sites. This is indicated in the following observations:

- CLEAR is in compliance with AB 853, as detailed in the table on the following pages, which examines program compliance vis-à-vis the requirements of the legislation.
- As originally envisioned by the developers of the CLEAR program, collaboration within the program has been multi-tiered and multi-faceted.
- At the **executive** level, collaboration has concentrated on policy, management and funding issues as well as ensuring the *collaborative nature* of the program at all levels.
- At the **operational** level, collaboration includes joint agency activities such as police/probation ride-alongs and searches, vertical prosecutions, and community engagement in law enforcement and prevention.

## **CLEAR Program Compliance with AB 853<sup>1</sup>**

### **1. The Multiagency Collaborative (Section 14000)**

- CLEAR was set up as described and has provided a flexible and coordinated response to street gang crime. It did not focus on the 18<sup>th</sup> Street Gang, as that gang was not active in the CLEAR areas during this period.

### **2. The Role of Each Party to the Agreement (Section 14001)**

- All parties engaged in collaborative activities at executive and operational levels.
- During 1999, a comprehensive system was developed to track and report program activities. Coordination with prevention and intervention programs also occurred, most fully at Northeast CLEAR.

#### **a) The County District Attorney (DA)**

- The DA has coordinated the Executive Committee, and provided each site with vertical prosecution. Coordination, site training and other assistance was greatly enhanced by staffing an administrative office early in 1999.
- Cross-designation was felt to be necessary and used only at the Foothill site for Phases I and II; civil gang injunctions were used only at Pacific CLEAR.

#### **b) The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD)**

- The CLEAR Unsolved Homicide Unit and the CLEAR sites have taken considerable advantage of jail and prison intelligence. The LASD crime analyst distributes crime information to each of the CLEAR sites on a regular basis.

#### **c) The County Probation Department**

- CLEAR-assigned Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) have case loads specifically for gang members in their target area, and conduct numerous joint activities and share information with law enforcement.
- CLEAR DPOs at Pacific and Foothill have met with school representatives about gang interventions; the Northeast CLEAR DPO sits on a Multidisciplinary Team with human services and law enforcement representatives.

#### **d) The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD)**

- LAPD provides intensive law enforcement in areas most impacted by criminal street gangs and coordinates gang information with LASD and Probation through LAPD CLEAR Liaisons, the LASD Crime Analyst and connections with Parole.

#### **e) The Los Angeles City Attorney (CA)**

- The CA vertically prosecutes gang misdemeanors and coordinates civil building abatement and nuisance abatement activities at all sites.

### **3. Mobile Response Units (Section 14002)**

- These units – called Operations Teams since early in Phase I – function out of a central location near each CLEAR target area.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the copy of the referred-to sections of the Penal Code found in Attachment 15.

Compliance (*cont.*)

#### **4. Working with Other Organizations (Section 14003)**

- Assistance is solicited from local school police, federal agencies (e.g., Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms, Housing and Urban Development, Federal Bureau of Investigation), state parole, California Youth Authority and others.
- CLEAR works regularly with each community to exchange information and respond to community needs.

#### **5. Community Impact Teams (Section 14004)**

- Active Community Impact Teams were well-established in Northeast and Foothill and were developing well in Pacific at the end of 1999.

## ***II. The Nature of CLEAR's Multi-Level Collaborative***

- Participating agencies have, by and large, provided a full complement of staff to each CLEAR site, with representation of all of the different agencies involved in each targeted area. The actual size of the CLEAR teams has varied across the sites.
- The evaluation's field observations note that 1) a lack of adequate facilities has been a major impediment; 2) there has been significant staff turnover and reassignment; 3) the Unsolved Homicide Team has not targeted CLEAR geographic areas specifically; and 4) the Community Impact Teams have developed most strongly in two of the three sites.

## ***III. Impact on Gang-related Crime & Community Quality of Life***

- **Changes in the Level of Gang-related Crime.** Compared with moving average crime rates before the implementation of CLEAR, and controlling for general changes in crime, statistically significant decreases in gang-related crime are found in the oldest (Northeast) and newest (Pacific) Phase II CLEAR sites. Interpretation of these findings is complicated by questions about the adequacy of the statistical comparison areas.
- **Resolution of Gang-related Homicides.** The AB 853 criterion of "a 5% increase in the resolution rate of gang homicides in the target area" is met largely in the oldest site (Northeast), where data are also most complete: a 5% increase in the first year and 33% increase in year two. In addition, Northeast gang homicides took increasingly shorter periods of time to reach resolution by the LAPD. Findings for Foothill and Pacific CLEAR were either negative or inconclusive.
- **Violence and Nuisance Activities.** Violent crimes in general decreased substantially (from 12% to 61%) in all targeted areas except the Northeast

CLEAR secondary area (an increase of 3%). The AB 853 criterion of “a 5% decrease in violent felonies within the target area” was therefore generally met, but this reduction also occurred in the comparison areas. Indications that CLEAR has met the AB 853 criteria of “a 5% decrease in nuisance activities by gangs in the target area” are anecdotal, largely from CIT members.

- **Targeting High Gang Crime Areas.** For both gang-related and violent crime, at all sites, target areas have substantially higher crime rates per 100,000 population *and* per square mile than their comparison areas – confirming that high crime areas were chosen for the program. However, these differences may work against the need for statistical comparison areas that are similar on important factors.

#### ***IV. Costs and Benefits of CLEAR***

- **Program Costs.** The highest estimates of direct program cost (just under \$900 thousand per year), are for Northeast CLEAR, the only site participating in Phase I. Program costs are estimated to be similar for Pacific (\$844 thousand) and about a third less for Foothill (just under \$600 thousand). Compilation of relevant data and analysis of program costs and benefits will continue in the next evaluation, which covers the program through Phase III.
- **Monetary Benefits.** The cost-benefit model used in this study contains a number of assumptions and restrictions. Based on estimated savings from crime victimization alone, both Northeast and Pacific produced monetary benefits beyond the cost of these programs. To date, total benefits from this source (for combined primary and secondary targeted areas) are estimated to be between \$2.6 and \$7.8 million for Northeast and between \$850 thousand and \$5 million for Pacific. Estimates for Foothill are inconclusive.
- **Non-Monetary Benefits.** Several categories of non-monetary benefit of CLEAR – such as the creation of a lasting inter-departmental collaborative and community engagement – are an important complement to the estimation of monetary benefits. One of the most important non-monetary benefits is that community members on the Community Impact Teams reported that the target neighborhoods feel safer because of CLEAR.

#### ***V. Critical Elements for Replicating the CLEAR Program***

- **Executive** level elements stress engaging local political offices, representing the program to department executives, institutionalizing the program with policy and staffing, clarifying the program model and ensuring administrative support.
- **Operational** elements identified as essential include written guidelines, staff training, system-wide planning, manual and automated information systems, administrative assistance, strategic staff assignment, facilities adequate for collaborative activity, and adequate intra- and inter-component communication.
- **Fiscal** elements include supporting different program components in the proper balance, tying resources to goals, and using funds to leverage other resources.

Recommendations for *improving* CLEAR are more specific. They include the need to refine the geographic focus. The CLEAR program could likely be replicated in another location (e.g., outside of LA County) for approximately \$1 million per year.

## **VI. Recommendations for Sustaining CLEAR**

Recommendations for sustaining the current program, with possibly reduced resources, are, essentially, extensions of elements for improving and replicating CLEAR. However, some elements deal most directly with sustaining:

- **Executive** level elements include high-level policy changes, the use of non-monetary incentives, elucidating the program concept (the “logic model”) and expanding the core collaborative to include other law enforcement (e.g., parole) and community-based agencies (public and nonprofit).
- **Operational** recommendations focus on acquiring proper facilities, finding a sponsoring agency in the community, and the full use of technologies for identifying and sharing gang member, crime and strategic information.
- **Fiscal** items to help ensure that the program can be sustained include prioritizing coordination, using funds to leverage cooperation and finding outside resources for support functions. It is reasonable to expect that a minimal CLEAR program could be sustained for less than \$½ million per year.